



OUTLOOK

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BAN'ETSU EXPRESSWAY COMPLETED



The first of October saw the long awaited opening of the Ban'etsu Highway in its entirety following the completion of the last remaining 22 kilometre section between Fukushima's Nishi Aizu and Tsukawa in Niigata. The 213 kilometre long highway, which horizontally links Fukushima's Iwaki City on Japan's east coast with Niigata City on the west coast, was officially opened in a ceremony in Niigata's Kamikawamura, with Fukushima's Governor Sato and Niigata's Governor Hirayama doing

the honours. Following the cutting of the tape, a convoy made its way to Nishi Aizu where the highway was officially opened to traffic.

The opening signalled the end of twelve years of construction, and slices the travelling time from coast to coast by more than two hours from around five and a half hours using the old, winding route of State Highway 49, to about three hours. As a result, a one day trip to Niigata is now possible for people living in the Nakadori and Hamadori re-

gions. The Ban'etsu highway crosses with the Joban highway in Iwaki, the Tohoku highway in Koriyama and the Hokuriku highway in Niigata, creating a network which enables easy access to destinations in Tohoku and Hokuriku, in addition to the Tokyo metropolis. It is anticipated that this will result in an increase in industrial, economic and cultural activity and exchange between these regions. The highway also makes Fukushima's famous Aizu-Bandai

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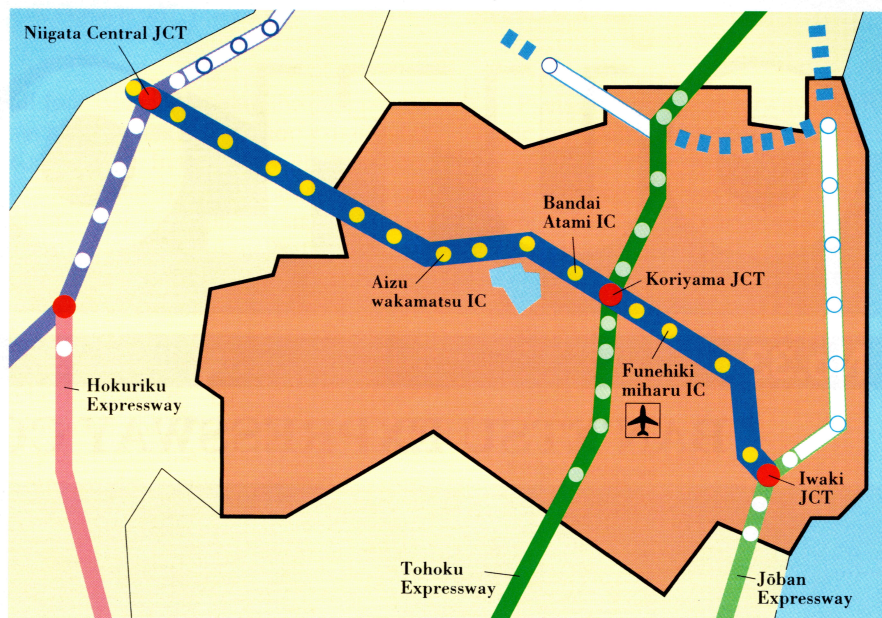
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sightseeing region more easily accessible to tourists and it is hoped that this will have a positive effect on the area's economy.

The importance of the highway can also be appreciated when considering the effects of the major earthquake in Kobe three years ago, when the city was cut off from the rest of Japan as a result of the damage to its transport routes. The existence of the highway network in Fukushima Prefecture in addition to its Shinkansen and local train lines means that even if a major earthquake should strike the region, emergency services will not be cut off from the area through lack of transport routes.

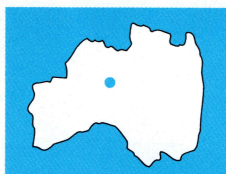
More than 150 kilometres of the highway runs through Fukushima Prefecture and within that distance, there are no less than ten interchanges. Between Iwaki and Koriyama cities, there are exits at Iwaki Miwa, Ono, Funehiki and East Koriyama, and for those wishing to visit sightseeing spots in the beautiful Aizu district, an exit can



be made from any one of six interchanges from Bandai Atami to Nishi Aizu. The toll charge for a trip from

Iwaki to Aizu Wakamatsu is 3,150 yen, while from Iwaki to Niigata, the charge is 5,000 yen. ❀

TSURUGAJO CASTLE



1874.

Tsurugajo castle was restored to its original state in 1965 and has become an important historical site, representing the warrior culture of the past. Standing five stories tall, the castle looks out over the town and is surrounded by a stone wall and moat. In the castle grounds are planted a thousand cherry trees which add to its

charm, especially when they are in full bloom in spring. Inside the castle is a history museum with exhibits ranging from excavated artifacts from the fourth century to displays on the Boshin War to local arts and crafts.

Tsurugajo castle is open daily to visitors from 8:30am to 4:30pm and is located 15 minutes east of Aizu Wakamatsu Station. ❀

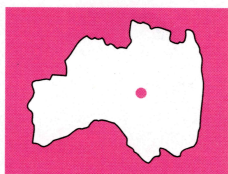
Aizu Wakamatsu is well known for being the gateway to the beautiful scenic region of Ura Bandai, but it is also famous for its historical sights, the most prominent being Tsurugajo Castle, which is regarded as the symbol of the city.

The castle was built at the end of the fourteenth century by Lord Ashina, and served as a stronghold for generations of rulers that followed, although it changed hands several times as the result of political struggles and wars. Aizu Wakamatsu was a prosperous castle town until the Boshin War broke out at the beginning of the Meiji period (1868 - 1912). Although the people of Aizu fought valiantly to defend their town and castle, they were defeated by the anti-shogunate forces who eventually destroyed the castle in





WORLD FRIENDSHIP 21



One of the major projects currently occurring in Fukushima Prefecture is the bid to be the new site for the nation's capital. Fukushima has proposed the Abukuma region in the southern part of the prefecture as a prospective area for the relocation of Japan's political centre. As research for this proposal, the symposium "World Friendship 21" was held at Koriyama's Hotel Hamatsu on 12 November to give citizens of Fukushima a chance to hear the experiences and ideas of diplomats whose countries have experienced the relocation of their capital cities.

Fukushima's Governor Sato chaired the panel which featured Minister Christoph Brummer of the German Embassy, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission Trevor Wilson from the Australian Embassy, and Andre Benturini dos Santos, Head of the Cultural Affairs Section of the Brazilian



Symposium in progress

Embassy. Of the three countries represented, Australia and Brazil have experienced the relocation of their capital cities - Australia in 1988 when Parliament Buildings were moved from Melbourne to Canberra, and Brazil in 1960 when the capital shifted from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia. Germany is currently preparing for the move of its capital city from Bonn to Berlin which will occur in the year 2000.

Governor Sato opened the symposium by outlining the prefecture's vision of what the new capital ought to be, the concept of *Mori ni shizumu toshi*, or "A City Nestling in Forest". The basis of Fukushima's bid is that nature and the environment should play a large role in

city planning, with beautiful landscapes and compact buildings being the priorities. The five aims of 'A City Nestling in Forest' are to maintain the good environment, to create a community which is proud of its intimacy, city planning without too much dependence on automobiles, cohabitation with the forest and the conservation of energy and resources.

The three diplomats were then given the opportunity to speak about the experiences of their respective countries with regard to the moving of their capital cities. Using slides, each illustrated points of interest and importance related to urban planning and development in their country and a lively discussion and exchange of ideas ensued.

The guests were all in agreement as far as recommendations for Governor Sato were concerned. They stressed the importance of not rushing the process of city planning in order to ensure the citizens in the area and everyone involved understand what is happening. Harmony with nature, already a priority in Fukushima, was also emphasised with the advice that trees and plants should be plentiful in order to create a good environment and a lasting impression on those that visit the city. Lastly, the importance of designing new buildings so that they blend in with old buildings already in existence was also discussed.

The symposium was heralded as a great success, and it is hoped that the invaluable lessons learned from the experiences of other countries will assist Fukushima in leading Japan into the 21st century as its new capital city. ✨



Fukushima's ideal capital: "A City Nestling in Forest"



FUKUSHIMA'S AUTUMN COLOURS



The coming of autumn in Japan brings the beautiful reds and yellows of autumn foliage, and Fukushima, with its abundance of nature, is no exception. It is natural therefore, that the viewing of the autumn leaves (kouyou in Japanese) is a popular pastime during October, when the change in temperature starts to take effect. Fukushima boasts some spectacular scenery during this time, the best of which can be enjoyed from

Right: The autumn colours of Nagasenuma, one of several swamps in the Ura Bandai region. Mt Bandai towers in the distance.

numerous spots throughout Aizu

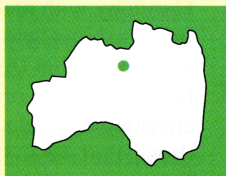
The Ura Bandai area in Aizu is

nationally renowned for its scenic mountains and lakes. A beautiful area in all seasons, the autumn scenery is especially eye-catching as the trees, ablaze with vibrant colours, contrast with the clear blue lakes and streams. In the

distance, Fukushima's "treasure mountain", Mount Bandai provides a majes-



SISTERLY LOVE



Aizu's Kitashiobara-mura had cause to celebrate on 7 November as it signed a sister city agreement with the town of Turangi in New Zealand. The signing ceremony took place in Tongariro, New Zealand, with seventeen representatives from Kitashiobara and thirteen from

Turangi in attendance.

The sister city pledge was signed by Mayor Takahashi of Kitashiobara-mura and the Chairman of the Turangi Tongariro Community Board, Councillor Tim Hurley, and was followed by a welcome performance by the children of Turangi who sang and danced for the visitors. The delegation then moved to the site where three years earlier, Mayor Takahashi had planted a

cherry tree as a symbol of the friendship between the two regions. Here, a plaque was unveiled to commemorate the



The sister city pledge is signed



tic backdrop to the scene. The gateway to the Bandai-Asahi National Park, Ura Bandai is an ideal starting point for kouyou in this area.

Nakatsugawa River, with its many waterfalls, is famed for its autumn foliage. The river cuts through a 100 metre high gorge and is the water source for Lake Akimoto, the deepest lake on the Bandai plateau. A beautiful sight all year round, the gorge is particularly impressive when the leaves change colour (*left*), and the yellows and reds of the trees contrast with the white rapids. The Lakeline



Above: A train crosses over the Tadami River in Mishima-machi with autumn foliage in the foreground.



Bridge (*left*) is the perfect place from which to enjoy this view. The West Azuma Mountain Range in the distance provides the backdrop.

The Tadami train line, which runs between Aizu Wakamatsu and Tadami-machi in the west of the Prefecture, also boasts spectacular autumn scenery along its route. The journey takes several hours but is a perfect way to see the autumn colours so is well worth the time.



occasion.

Exchanges have been occurring between Kitashiobara-mura and Turangi since 1994. The two regions are similar in size, each with populations of about 4000 people, and both areas are popular tourist spots. Kitashiobara-mura is in the heart of the Ura-Bandai



Kitashiobara-mura and Turangi are similar not only in population but in scenery: the former is in the vicinity of Mount Bandai and the Bandai Plateau which features many lakes and marshes such as Nakasenuma marsh (top left) while the latter is close to Lake Taupo and Mount Ruapehu (bottom left).

sightseeing area which features Mt Bandai, Lake Hibara and Goshikinuma swamp, while Turangi, situated 300 kilometres south of New Zealand's largest city Auckland, is in the area of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake. The region is famous for its good fishing and water sports as well as its picture book scenery, and is also close to some of the North Island's major ski fields.

The sister city pledge opens the door for exchange at the grass roots level, with sports and cultural exchanges in the pipeline. It is hoped this will give the citizens of Kitashiobara-mura and Turangi an opportunity to deepen the link between Japan and New Zealand while cultivating a lasting friendship between the two towns. 🌸



THE MELON PRINCESS

民話

Folktales



Long, long ago, there lived an elderly man and his wife who were very happy together. One day, they found a little girl wandering in the fields close to their home. They were not sure where she had come from, but she was as pretty as a princess, so they took her home and cared for her. The couple named the girl Melon Princess, as she was found in the middle of a field of melons and was very beautiful. The man and his wife were very happy, as they did not have any children, so they brought up the girl with a lot of love.

When she reached a marriageable age, Melon Princess learned how to weave and she worked at her loom every day. The elderly couple were very protective of her and always worried about her because of her extraordinary beauty. One day, the couple had to go and work in the fields. As they were both going, the old man said, "Melon Princess, there is a devil called Amanjaku in this area who eats people, especially young ladies like yourself, so

when we are away, don't open the door to anybody." In saying that, the elderly couple set off to work in the fields. Left alone in the house, Melon Princess busied herself at her loom. While she was working, Amanjaku passed by the house and knocked on the door.

"Melon Princess, open the door! Melon Princess, open the door!" he called.

Mel on P r i n c e s s remembered the warning her father had given to her before he left for work in the fields and called back, "I can't open the door. Mother and Father told me never to open the door when they were away," and went back to work at her loom. Hearing this, Amanjaku started yelling "Melon Princess, just open the door a little! Just a little!"

He was making so much noise that Melon Princess, without thinking, opened the door a fraction.

Quick as a flash, Amanjaku put his hand through the gap in the door and pulled it wide open. He stormed into the house and ate Melon Princess in one gulp. He then disguised himself as Melon Princess, turning himself into a beautiful woman and, as though nothing had happened, went to work at the loom.

That evening, the elderly couple, who of course knew nothing of the events of earlier in the day, returned from the fields. "Melon Princess, we're home!" They entered the house to find Melon Princess dressed the same as usual and looking the same as usual with nothing to suggest anything different from the norm.

"Melon Princess, did Amanjaku come?"

"No he didn't," replied Amanjaku disguised as Melon Princess, and returned to working at the loom.

Soon after, Melon Princess, being the beautiful woman that she was, received an offer of marriage from a wealthy family and so the



Illustrations by Kerry Dunne

couple made preparations for her to be sent away as a bride. When the time came when she had to leave, a beautiful palanquin was sent for her. (Of course Melon Princess was still Amanjaku in disguise.) The elderly couple, who still did not realise their beloved daughter had been replaced by a devil in disguise, sobbed and cried at the prospect of being separated from her.

The time for departure arrived, and the couple saw Melon Princess to her palanquin. "Melon Princess! Melon Princess! Melon Princess!" they cried, their voices growing hoarse.

At that moment, out of nowhere, a beautiful bird flew into a tree nearby.

"That's not Melon Princess in the palanquin, it's Amanjaku!" it sang.

The elderly couple and the servants carrying the palanquin looked at each other saying "What a strange bird. This is a bad omen - maybe we should catch it." They pursued the bird which returned to the same spot and sang again, "That's not Melon Princess in the Palanquin, it's Amanjaku!"

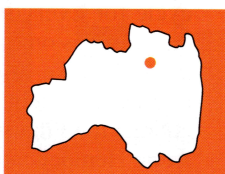
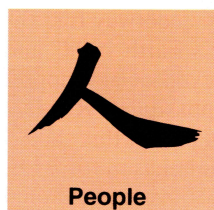
This time, the elderly couple finally realised that the person in the palanquin was not their daughter but the devil Amanjaku. Fuming at the knowledge that their beloved daughter was dead, they chased him down, and caught him and so restored peace to the village. ✨



K. Dunne



FUKUSHIMA'S FIRST S.E.A



November saw the arrival of a new JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) participant to Fukushima City. New Zealander Henry Matthews joins the 95 odd JETs already situated in various locations around the Prefecture as Fukushima's first Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA). Based at the Fukushima Prefectural Government's Sports Division, Henry will be involved in coaching and improving the level of rugby in the prefecture.

A graduate of New Zealand's Otago University, an institution with a long and heralded rugby tradition, Henry comes to Fukushima Prefecture with several years of coaching and sports exchange experience under his belt. After graduating he spent a year working for Air New Zealand's marketing division before spending two years with the North Harbour Sports Foundation promoting international relations and exchange through sport, including several rugby exchanges with Japan.

Henry has been involved in rugby since the age of eight when he joined a junior club. He played throughout his

student life until his third year of university when an injury permanently sidelined him. However, rather than quit rugby altogether, he turned his hand to coaching, studying for the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) coaching exams and gaining a Level 3 qualification, the highest level. This qualifies him to coach at provincial level.

A goal to coach rugby in another country brought Henry to Japan and he intends to use this opportunity both to develop his rugby coaching experience further and to encourage exchange between Japan and New Zealand. Henry's previous employment brought him to Japan twice on rugby related business so he is not unfamiliar with the Japanese game. As an SEA he will be working through the Fukushima Rugby Union and will be involved in the development of rugby at every level, although primarily with Senior High School teams. He will also take part in the training and preparation of the Tohoku representative team for the national Kokutai tournament in the middle of next year.

Henry's main aim during his time in Japan as a coach is to emphasise to Japanese rugby players the importance of enjoying the game. He describes this as a large part of the New Zealand rugby



Henry Matthews

ethos and believes it is one of the differences between rugby in Japan and in New Zealand. However, the most major difference in his opinion is that in New Zealand children begin playing at age four or five, whereas in Japan players are fifteen or sixteen years old before they start. This is an obvious disadvantage to rugby in Japan as the players do not have as much time to develop fundamental skills, and as a result teams make many basic mistakes such as dropping the ball. Henry also regards Japanese rugby as being unstructured and stricken with injuries and therefore aims to give players in Fukushima not only an appreciation of New Zealand's rugby style - intelligent, structured, open and played with flair - but also educate them about injury prevention and fitness.

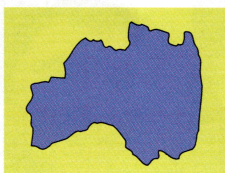
The warmth and helpfulness of the people of Fukushima have greatly impressed Henry as has the similarity of Fukushima's scenery to that of New Zealand. While in Japan he intends to see as much of the country as possible, meet as many people as possible and gain an appreciation of Japanese culture and customs. Also as Fukushima's first SEA, he stresses that his services are open to any rugby team of any level or ability within the prefecture and encourages teams to get in touch with him at the Sports Division if they would like advice or help. ❀



At work



BICYCLE FOR EVERYONE'S EARTH



On 29 September, two former JETs from Fukushima and a former JET from Iwate completed a two month odyssey, cycling the length of Japan from Wakkanai at the tip of Hokkaido to Yaku Island south of Kyushu. Jason Edens (Tomioka machi) and Barbara Allen (Soma City) along with Joel Krentz (Mizusawa, Iwate) rode almost 3000 kms on a crusade called "Bicycle for Everyone's Earth", to raise consciousness about environmental issues.

The trio's journey took them through

all four islands, passing through places such as Tomakomai, Sado Island and Kagoshima. In keeping with the theme of their campaign they also visited areas of environmental concern such as Nakai-kemi marsh in Fukui Prefecture and Isahaya Bay in Nagasaki Prefecture and assisted with raising awareness of the dilemmas these areas are facing. A stop was also made in Minamata, the city in Kyushu made notoriously famous over forty years ago by the pollution-related Minamata disease. The group were also in great demand for various events along the way, taking part in everything from school visits and beach clean ups to environmental forums and charity concerts.

Plans are already underway for "Bicycle for Everyone's Earth 1998" and the search is on for cyclists and support crew to make this possible. Readers interested in being a part of this should contact the Fukushima liason for BEE, Anne Hempel care of the International Affairs Division, or Joel Krentz on (0197) 23-5588 after 9pm. ✻



C I R N O T E S

Deep in the mountains of Aizu lies a small karate dojo run by a little old karate sensei.... Well, that was the vision I had when I heard about Mr Sumio Yuda's karate club in the town of Shimogomachi in Aizu. Being a keen karate student myself, I jumped at the chance to visit this dojo, which has recently risen to prominence with the victory of one of its students at the national championships. On arriving at the dojo, I found that although it was set deep in the Aizu mountains, the instructor was anything but little and old. Mr Yuda is one of only a few people in Japan who hold a sixth dan black belt and has won and placed highly in several international karate competitions.

There are several different schools of karate, with each dojo usually being affiliated to a style. However, Mr Yuda's

dojo is unusual in that it is independent, and not confined to the instruction of one form of karate only. The training session I attended featured two black belts



Mr Yuda (left) with two of his students

who were both training in different styles. Mr Yuda believes that each form of karate has its merits and so people should not necessarily be confined to the one school.

Naturally one does not become a sixth dan black belt without practice and Mr Yuda is no exception. In addition to teaching in the evenings, he religiously trains for three hours every morning, 365 days a year without fail. However, his philosophy is that while physical fitness and strength are necessary to advance in the art of karate, mental strength and alertness are the most important abilities to possess. It is easy to become a black belt and even a national champion, he says, but when you compete internationally, the difference between the competitors is not their physical strength, but the strength of their minds.

This journal is produced by Ellen Burgess of the International Affairs Division of the Fukushima Prefectural Government. For further information, or to be put on the mailing list, please phone 024-521-7183, fax 024-521-7919, e-mail interaff@mail.pref.fukushima.jp, or write to us at: International Affairs Division, Sugitsuma-cho 2-16, Fukushima-shi, 960-8670. Outlook is sent free of charge.